



March 8, 2006

Phil Isenberg, Chair  
MLPA – Blue Ribbon Task Force  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Isenberg:

Our organizations are writing to express our enthusiastic support for Packages 2 and AC. We commend the MLPA-I staff for their timely delivery of your requested draft of a potential preferred alternative package of MPAs (Package S). We appreciate their effort to produce a proposal that incorporates parts of each package generated by the Regional Stakeholder Group (Packages 1, 2, and 3). We believe the top priority should be creating a robust network that fully meets the goals and guidelines of the MLPA, as demonstrated by high marks in the scientific evaluation and designation of the region's ecological treasures as marine reserves. Package S does not, in its current form, meet this standard.

Specifically, the staff has developed a bare minimum proposal. Packages 2 and AC meet the goals and guidelines of the MLPA and provide high quality protection to a wide range of habitats and marine life. These packages accomplish this through thoughtfully placed marine reserves, affording the most outstanding areas the highest level of protection. Package 2 achieves these goals with minimal potential short-term impacts on fishing activities. The Science Advisory Team gave both these proposals high marks. Both packages will help ensure productive, persistent populations of a wide variety of fish species, and, produce lasting increases in benefits for uses such as diving, kayaking, wildlife view and tourism. Places such as Point Sur and Piedras Blancas deserve the highest level of protection because they have special habitats and marine communities that are a central part of the state's natural heritage. Unfortunately, Package S reduces the level of protection in such areas by reducing the size of the reserves and buffering them with SMCAs that are not sufficiently protective. We are also concerned, given the lack of highly protected areas in the preferred size range, about whether Package S can sustain depleted and vulnerable species such as bocaccio, canary and widow rockfish.

Polls show again and again that Californians love the coast and all it provides for us. Just last week, the Public Policy Institute of California released their latest statewide survey focused on marine and coastal issues in California. They found that 75% of Californians support the creation of new MPAs and seven in ten residents in favor of creating more marine reserves off the California coast. Many Californians also think that governments are not doing enough to

protect marine and coastal areas. The implementation of the MLPA, and your role in it, is a chance to step up to the plate and help give Californians the type of ocean protection they expect the MLPA to provide.<sup>1</sup>

We encourage you to select Package 2 or AC as your preferred package to forward to the Department of Fish and Game. Package 2 in particular meets a high standard of protection with very low potential impacts. This decision should not be about the bare minimum; it should be about leaving a great legacy for future generations of Californians.

Sincerely,

Erin Simmons and Kaitilin Gaffney  
**The Ocean Conservancy**

Karen Garrison  
**Natural Resources Defense Council**

Linda Sheehan  
**California CoastKeeper Alliance**

Susan Smartt  
**California League of Conservation Voters**

Jim Curland  
**Defenders of Wildlife**

Steve Shimek  
**The Otter Project**

Gary A. Patton  
**Planning and Conservation League**

Gordon Hensley  
**San Luis Obispo CoastKeeper**

Kaye Freeman  
**Surfrider Foundation**

Mike Osmond  
**World Wildlife Fund**

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<sup>1</sup> Public Policy Institute of California. "Californians and the Environment." PPIC Statewide Survey. February, 2006.